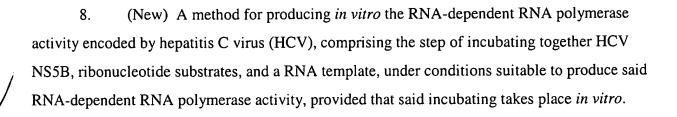
Serial No.:

Case No.: IT0002PCA



- 9. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein said NS5B is purified.
- 10. (New) The method of claim 9, wherein said NS5B has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.
- 11. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein said NS5B is produced from a NS2-NS3-NS4-NS5 polyprotein by means of multiple proteolytic events that occur in an organism expressing nucleic acid encoding said NS2-NS3-NS4-NS5 polyprotein, followed by purification of said NS5B.
- 12. (New) A method for identifying a HCV RNA-dependent RNA polymerase inhibitor comprising:
- (a) incubating *in vitro* a composition comprising HCV NS5B, ribonucleotide substrates, an RNA template, and a test compound, under conditions suitable to produce NS5B RNA-dependent RNA polymerase activity in the absence of said compound; and
- (b) measuring the ability of said compound to affect said NS5B RNA-dependent RNA polymerase activity.
- 13. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said NS5B is the only HCV protein present during said incubating.
- 14. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said method measures primer independent RNA-dependent RNA polymerase activity.

Serial No.:

Case No.: IT0002PCA

15. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein said method measures primer independent RNA-dependent RNA polymerase activity.

- 16. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said NS5B is purified.
- 17. (New) The method of 12, wherein said NS5B has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.
- 18. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said NS5B is produced from a NS2-NS3-NS4-NS5 polyprotein by means of multiple proteolytic events that occur in an organism expressing nucleic acid encoding said NS2-NS3-NS4-NS5 polyprotein, followed by purification of said NS5B.
- 19. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein said NS5B is provided as an extract of an organism expressing nucleic acid encoding said NS5B.